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ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

**Written statement submitted by the International Movement
of Apostolate in Independent Milieux***

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[2 January 2001]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, as received from the submitting non-governmental organization.

1. Pursuant to its congress held from 27 to 29 November 2000, MIAMSI welcomes the efforts of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, in particular the Commission on Human Rights, and of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to make concrete progress towards the enjoyment by all (including the poorest) of economic, social and cultural rights.
2. On the basis of MIAMSI's priority goals, 1,200 members from 35 countries on four continents (Africa, Asia, America and Europe) worked throughout the three days and towards the adoption of seven proposals designed to encourage the participation of our members (who are fortunate not to live in extreme poverty) in the promotion of human rights, the eradication of extreme poverty and the building of a world based on genuine solidarity.
3. A worldwide forum such as ours provides a place where human rights promoters of all philosophical and religious persuasions and Christians wishing to be active in the world can meet in a spirit of brotherhood.
4. In order to make concrete progress towards the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development through individual and collective action, by forging new paths and seeking to free ourselves from fatalism, scepticism, conformity and fear, the following three goals were chosen:
 - (a) To combine individual action with action aimed at social structures.
 - (b) To work constantly with others, with the poor themselves, who have not waited for us in order to take responsibility for their own development and are seeking the means of achieving it.
 - (c) Constantly to undertake modest initiatives, in small affirmations of possibility which are the embodiment of our will to change things and act.

The Congress adopted the following seven proposals:

In the field of education:

In order to take part in the development of education for the benefit of all children, which aims at the blossoming of the entire individual and instils an awareness of the importance of generosity and peace:

1. Let us all, wherever we are, commit ourselves to projects on both a personal and collective level, together with all the social actors concerned (families, children, teachers, associations and public authorities ...).

In the economic field:

In order to witness, and take part in, the eradication of poverty:

2. Let us adopt a sober lifestyle and invest part of our time in activities for the benefit of others.
3. Let us participate in ethical and mutually-supportive financing initiatives (ethical investments, mutual funds for development, micro-credit, fair business practices, etc. ...) and let us promote them, on a collective basis, in the North, South, East and West.

In the field of politics, in a world where violence corrodes relationships between individuals and peoples, we must rehabilitate politics, restore its credibility and make it serve all individuals and all peoples:

4. By joining with other forces in monitoring and lobbying political practice. On this basis, let us commit ourselves, as rapidly as possible, to seeking the most appropriate legal instruments for a supranational "government" of the economy, based on solidarity and the general good.
5. By fostering citizenship education for young people and by promoting the role of women in politics.

In the field of work:

Let us work to change attitudes in the world of work.

6. Let us dare to reject the systematic reproduction of traditional models and patterns and imagine and experiment with other forms of work, building on the small steps forward which have already been taken.
7. Let us dare to ensure that the right to work is applied by businesses, including suppliers, by us personally (domestic employees, illegal labour ...) and in the production and marketing circuits of the products we buy.

5. It is the duty of the United Nations to bring individuals closer to the international bodies. If we in the Commission on Human Rights wish to see the effective enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development considered by everyone to be as important as the enjoyment of civil and political rights, pursuant to the decisions of the 1993 Vienna Conference, the Commission must devote more resources to that end, especially in view of the ever-increasing situations of poverty in the South and East, and even, in certain social categories, in the North. It must also give the people who are discovering the planet-wide implications of their citizenship guidelines concerning rights, challenges in regulating globalization and the means of controlling their Governments and international bodies.

6. By way of example we wish to refer to the statement we delivered before the Commission in 2000, asking it, the Committee and the Office of the High Commissioner to seek ways to encourage States to respect their human rights commitments and their obligations under earlier conventions when they take decisions, with particular reference to the World Trade Organization.

7. Thus the Commission will become better known and gain credibility in world public opinion. Thus the men and women of the planet will be encouraged to promote the rights of all, beginning with the poorest, in a planet-wide initiative of citizenship. More of them will undertake local, national and international actions, having replaced, scepticism with trust, fatalism with hope and fear with love.
